

MDES

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

FY 2021

STATE FISCAL YEAR 2021





MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES), it is a pleasure to submit the MDES Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2021.

In October of 2021, Governor Tate Reeves announced me as Interim Executive Director for the agency. It has been a great honor to serve the great state of Mississippi during this transitional period. I am pleased to say MDES adapted quickly, and admirably overcame the obstacles placed before us due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I'm proud to say that Mississippi was one of the first in the nation to pay Unemployment Insurance benefits to claimants at the beginning of the pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, MDES worked quickly with support from the Governor's Office to implement federally funded programs that allowed Mississippians to get the assistance they needed.

We did not forget our mission of 'Helping Mississippians Get Jobs' during this time. The Governor's Job Fair Network and our local WIN Job Centers were challenged to provide a safe solution to continue job fairs. Drive-through job fairs are one of those solutions that allowed our team to host 376 job fair events, allowing employers to connect with job seekers.

MDES strives to be a leader in innovation within the technology we use to serve the public. The pandemic forced us to develop a better online experience for our users. Our developers gave the ReEmployMS homepage a facelift and a new feature, a virtual assistant, that provides self-service to our customers. Maggi, our virtual assistant, is a chatbot that lives on the ReEmploy homepage. She helps answer frequently asked questions, gives the status of an unemployment claim, and allows the users to reset their passwords. The chatbot and other adjustments help transform our technology, allowing us to provide better service to our customers, especially for those Mississippians needing simple assistance 24/7 while filing their claims online.

At MDES, we are excited about the commitment of our people and the progress we made in 2021. Our successes and services are featured in this year's annual report. We look forward to the opportunities ahead of us as we continue in our mission of 'Helping Mississippians Get Jobs.'

Sincerely,

Robin Stewart

Interim Executive Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



During fiscal year (FY) 2021, MDES continued in our mission of “Helping Mississippians Get Jobs” and provided employment assistance as needed. This year’s annual report shows how the agency implemented strategies and tools to help Mississippians find work and provide employment assistance at the utmost important time. Our commitment to service can be attributed to the commitment of our employees and the strength of our agency. The following is a summary of this commitment and what to expect in our report.

Our **Office of Workforce Services and Programs** worked with our partnerships and staff through our local **WIN Job Centers** to serve Mississippians with employment assistance. MDES provided 11,641 employers E-Verify services from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021. We received 144,462 job orders and 264,525 job openings as part of the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program.

During the pandemic, our team faced the challenge of providing job fairs, safely. To do this, the **Governor’s Job Fair Network** and the local WIN Job Centers switched to a drive-through format. MDES hosted 376 job fair events statewide.

The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** and core partners worked with Mississippi to design and develop a centralized system called the “WIOA Hub.” This Hub plays a crucial role in allowing agencies to refer customers electronically to ensure that no one falls through the process. The most common service provided by MDES during FY 2021 was reaching out to WIOA participants by email, phone, or a mailed

letter with information about a good job opportunity. MDES did this 235,464 times.

We utilized the **Mississippi Apprenticeship Program** that has proven to be life-changing, providing more sustainable wages, and promoting a better quality of life for many Mississippians with a total of 3,012 apprenticeships.

COVID-19 caused mass layoffs and devastated the state and its workforce. During FY 2021, our **Rapid Response (RR)** team provided services to 19,647 employees and 144 businesses.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges for the **Office of ReEmployment Assistance**. When the pandemic struck, MDES worked quickly with support from the Governor’s Office to implement federally funded programs that allowed Mississippians to get the assistance they needed. By legislative action, reimbursable employers were exempted from 50% of charges through March 13, 2021, and 75% of charges from March 14, 2021, through June 12, 2021.

MDES continued to modernize its **online unemployment insurance system**. The modernized system allowed quick implementation of law changes throughout the pandemic. Other enhancements included self-service capabilities, automation, a chatbot or virtual assistant to help with simple questions and services.

MDES brought on additional staff to assist with workloads. To help onboard staff, MDES created a **training department**. The training department hosted virtual training through a Learning Management System (LMS), allowing several training sessions as needed throughout the pandemic.

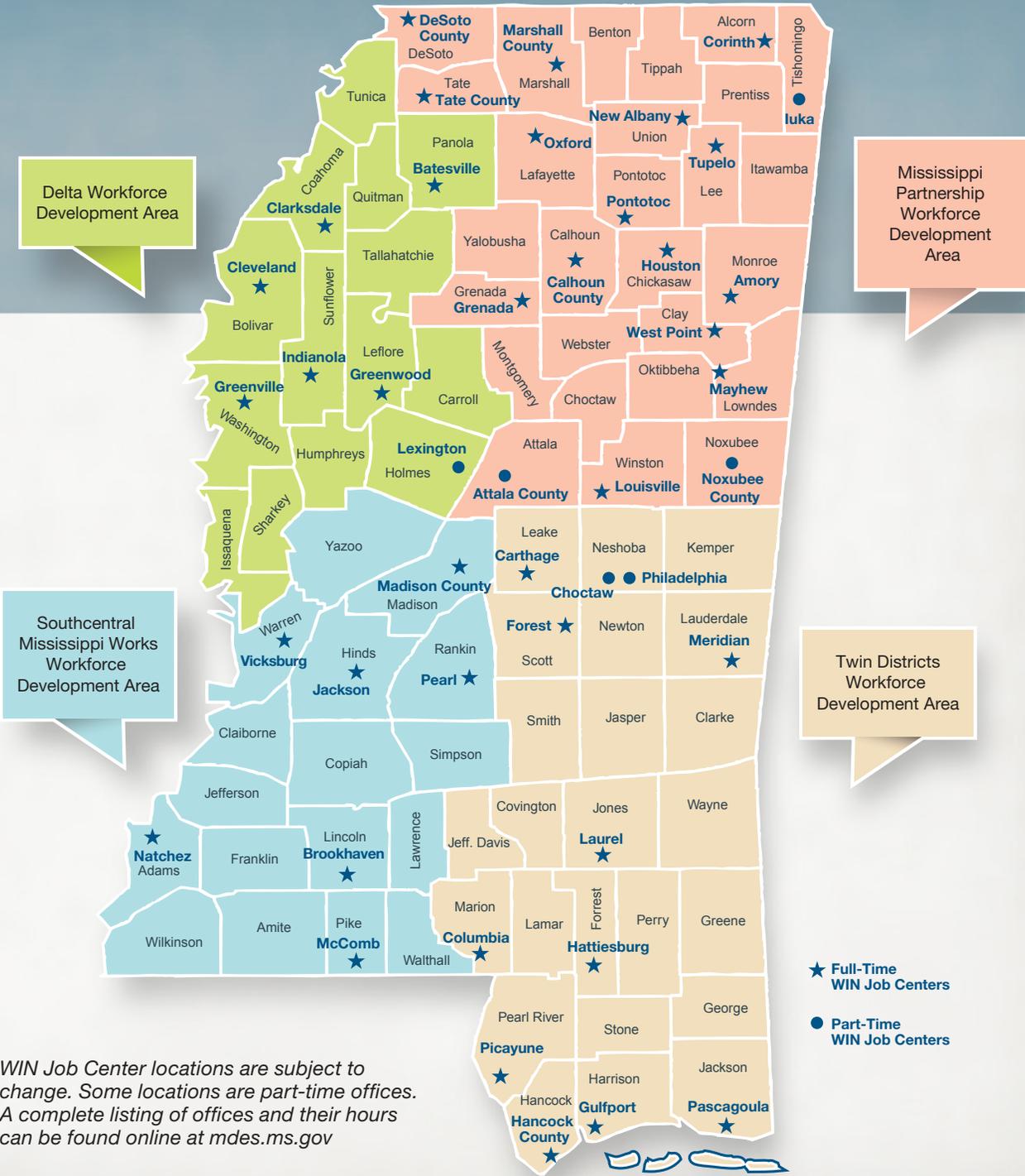
We provided **labor market information** to our job seekers and employers to help them understand the current employment situation in our state.

As we look ahead, we recognize that our customers are changing, and the rate of change is accelerating in our state and our nation. MDES is proud of our 2021 year of services and commitments to the great state of Mississippi.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS AND WIN JOB CENTERS

Combining federal, state, and community workforce programs and services, the Workforce Investment Network (WIN) in Mississippi creates a system that is both convenient and user-friendly. A comprehensive network of **WIN Job Centers** is located throughout the state.

The centers offer a variety of employment services to ensure all job seekers have the resources and tools needed to secure gainful employment. The services include job placement assistance, referral to training, priority of service for veterans, career counseling, and referrals to many other workforce partner programs. WIN Job Centers reach out to the business community to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.



WIN Job Center locations are subject to change. Some locations are part-time offices. A complete listing of offices and their hours can be found online at mdes.ms.gov

Amory

662-256-2618 and
662-256-5617
1619 Highland Drive
P.O. Box 415
Amory, MS 38821-0415

Attala County

662-289-2535
254 Hwy 12 West
Kosciusko, MS 39090

Batesville

662-360-1236
325 Lakewood Drive
Batesville, MS 38606

Brookhaven

601-833-3511
545 Brookway Blvd.
P.O. Box 790
Brookhaven, MS 39602-0790

Calhoun County

662-412-3170
237 S. Murphree Street
Pittsboro, MS 38951

Carthage

601-267-9282
202 C.O. Brooks St.
Carthage, MS 39051-4262

Choctaw, MS

601-663-7722
266 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350

Clarksdale

662-624-9001
236 Sharkey Ave., 3rd floor
Federal Building
P.O. Box 640
Clarksdale, MS 38614-0640

Cleveland

662-843-2704
119 N. Commerce Ave.
P.O. Box 1750
Cleveland, MS 38732-1750

Columbia

601-736-2628
1111 US Hwy 98
Columbia, MS 39429-3701

Corinth

662-696-2336
2759 S. Harper Road
Corinth, MS 38834-2050

Desoto County

662-280-6218
NWCC Desoto Campus
WIN Job Center Room # 300-L
5197 W. E. Ross Parkway
Southaven, MS 38671

Forest

601-469-2851
536 Deer Field Drive
Forest, MS 39074-6005

Greenville

662-332-8101
Delta Plaza Shopping Center
800 Martin Luther King Blvd.,
Suite C54
P.O. Box 5279
Greenville, MS 38704-5279

Greenwood

662-459-4600
812 W. Park Ave.
P.O. Box 554
Greenwood, MS 38935-0554

Grenada

662-226-2911
1229-A Sunset Drive
Grenada, MS 38901

Gulfport

228-897-6900
10162 Southpark Drive
P.O. Box 2849
Gulfport, MS 39505-2849

Hancock County

228-466-5425
856 Hwy 90 Suite D
Bay St Louis, MS 39520

Hattiesburg

601-584-1202
1911 Arcadia Street
Hattiesburg, MS 39401-5428

Houston

662-407-1219
210 S. Monroe St.
Houston, MS 38851

Indianola

662-887-2502
226 N. Martin Luther King Drive
P.O. Box 963
Indianola, MS 38751-0963

Iuka

662-423-9231
1107 Maria Lane
Iuka, MS 38852-1120

Jackson

601-446-3296 or 601-446-3549
5959 I-55 N, Frontage Road,
Suite C
Jackson, MS 39213

Laurel

601-399-4000
2139 Hwy 15 N, Suite D
Laurel, MS 39440

Lexington

662-834-2426
303 Yazoo Street
Lexington, MS 39095

Louisville

662-773-5051
790 N. Court Ave.
Louisville, MS 39339-2059

Madison County

601-407-2457
167 Orchard Lane North,
Madison, MS 39110

Marshall County Workforce Training Center

662-851-4190, 662-851-4191,
& 662-851-4192
4700 Cayce Road
Byhalia, MS 38611

Mayhew

662-243-1751
8731 South Frontage Rd
Mayhew, MS 39753

McComb

601-684-4421
1400-A Harrison Avenue
P.O. Box 1306
McComb, MS 39648

Meridian

601-553-9511
2000 Highway 19 N
Meridian, MS 39307-4906

Natchez

601-442-0243
107 Colonel John
Pitchford Parkway
P.O. Box 810
Natchez, MS 39121-0810

Noxubee County

662-726-5220
198 Washington Street
Macon, MS 39341

New Albany

662-692-1502
301 North St.
New Albany, MS 38652

Oxford

662-236-7201
1310 Belk Blvd.
Oxford, MS 38655

Pascagoula

228-762-4713
1604 Denny Ave.
P.O. Box 1058
Pascagoula, MS 39568-1058

Pearl

601-936-1903
3805 Highway 80 East
Pearl, MS 39208-4295

Philadelphia

601-389-3431
1016 Saxon Airport Road
Philadelphia, MS 39350

Picayune

601-798-3472
2005 Wildwood Road
Picayune, MS 39466

Pontotoc

662-407-1226
316 Coffee Street
Pontotoc, MS 38863

Tate County

662-562-3351
NW Community College
4975 Highway 51 N
Senatobia, MS 38668

Tupelo

662-842-4371 and
662-407-1213
3200 Adams Farm Road,
Suite 4
Belden, MS 38826

Vicksburg

601-619-2841
755 Hwy 27 S.
Vicksburg, MS 39180

West Point

662-243-2647
1899 East TVA Rd
West Point, MS 39773

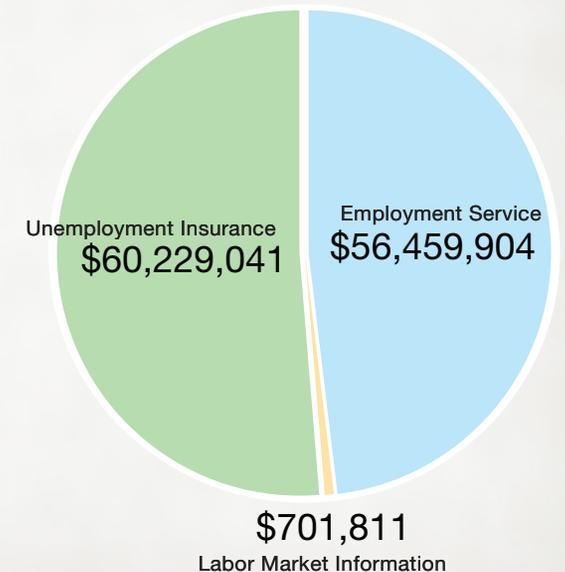
FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures by Program

Program	Personal Service	Travel	Contractual Service	Commodities	Capital Outlay other than equipment	Capital Outlay Equipment	Vehicles	Subsidies, Loans, and Grants	Total Expenditure
Employment Service	\$9,044,163.00	\$73,151.00	\$8,324,420.00	\$43,264.00	\$0.00	\$339,780.00	\$0.00	\$38,635,126.00	\$56,459,904.00
Labor Market Information	\$497,071.00	\$69.00	\$183,298.00	\$16,042.00	\$0.00	\$5,331.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$701,811.00
Unemployment Insurance	\$20,432,646.00	\$46,830.00	\$37,234,578.00	\$714,685.00	\$0.00	\$267,480.00	\$0.00	\$1,532,822.00	\$60,229,041.00
TOTAL	\$29,973,880.00	\$120,050.00	\$45,742,296.00	\$773,991.00	\$0.00	\$612,591.00	\$0.00	\$40,167,948.00	\$117,390,756.00

Source of Funding by Program

Program	Federal	State	Other	Total
Employment Service	\$51,829,601.00	\$0.00	\$4,630,303.00	\$56,459,904.00
Labor Market Information	\$701,811.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$701,811.00
Unemployment Insurance	\$40,239,331.00	\$0.00	\$19,989,710.00	\$60,229,041.00
TOTAL	\$92,770,743.00	\$0.00	\$24,620,013.00	\$117,390,756.00



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Performance Information

The following tables show attainment rates on each performance measure for the state as a whole. Each year, Mississippi negotiates attainment rates on each common performance measure with the U. S. Department of Labor. All of the data in Mississippi's WIOA performance reports is uniformly reported and validated in accordance with federal requirements.



MISSISSIPPI STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE

STATEWIDE REPORTED INFORMATION	NEGOTIATED LEVEL	ACTUAL LEVEL
Adult Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	81.0%	84.7%
Adult Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	78.0%	83.7%
Adult Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,400	\$6,430
Adult Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	54.0%	70.3%
Adult Measurable Skill Gain	50.0%	61.1%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	74.0%	71.3%
Dislocated Worker Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	74.3%
Dislocated Worker Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,300	\$5,656
Dislocated Worker Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	52.0%	69.1%
Dislocated Worker Measurable Skill Gain	45.5%	65.4%
Youth Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	74.0%	82.2%
Youth Employment Rate 4th Quarter Exit	72.0%	79.3%
Youth Credential Attainment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	71.0%	71.3%
Youth Measurable Skill Gain	48.0%	63.8%
Youth Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$2,650	\$3,266
Wagner Peyser Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.0%	73.1%
Wagner Peyser Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	65.0%	73.4%
Wagner Peyser Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,000	\$4,378

Workforce Services and Programs



Wagner Peyser

The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program focuses on providing a variety of services, including job search assistance, help getting a job referral and placement assistance for job seekers.

For the period of **July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021**, MDES received **144,462** job orders with a total of **264,525** openings.



Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) initiative in Mississippi provides intensive career services to reconnect Unemployment Insurance beneficiaries with work as quickly as possible. RESEA participants receive a minimum of two, one-on-one assessments and career counseling sessions.

Each session assists the participant by providing labor market information, job match and skills gap analysis, and soft skills training. RESEA participants are also provided practical job search tips, targeted work search assistance and job referrals. From **July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021**, MDES staff completed **11,001** counseling sessions.



E-Verify

The Mississippi Legislature, in the 2008 Legislative session, passed the Mississippi Employment Protection Act. This act requires employers to participate in the Department of Homeland Security E-Verify program. Part of the legislation provides a mechanism to make the verification process easier for employers by using the services offered by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES).

A total of **11,641** E-Verify services were provided to employers from **July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021**.



Temporary Agricultural Worker Programs

Mississippi Department of Employment Security manages the Migrant Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and H2-A Certification for Temporary Agricultural Worker programs. The MSFW program provides outreach and basic labor exchange services to those identified as migrant or seasonal farmworkers.

The H2-A program helps employers recruit temporary alien workers when qualified U.S. workers are not available.



Job Fair Events

Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) operates the Governor’s Job Fair Network. The Governor’s Job Fair Network is a series of community-sponsored, one-day events that bring together a diverse group of employers who are actively looking for employees. MDES works in partnership with other agencies and organizations to host each event. There were 13 Governor’s Job Fair events from **July 1, 2020, until June 30, 2021**, which served **226** employers/organizations.

In addition to the Governor’s Job Fair Network events, **363** job fairs were held at many WIN Job Centers for individual employers during the same time frame.



Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain individuals who have historically faced significant barriers to employment.

For the period of **July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021**, **38,358** WOTC applications were certified with potential tax credits to employer’s totaling **\$96,981,800.00**.

MDES' Pandemic Impact & Response

MDES adapted how we served the citizens of Mississippi while also having a safe environment for our customers and employees.

Being a public-facing agency, MDES had to transition many services from in-person to remote. Even with this significant change, MDES never closed any of its' WIN Job Centers to the public. MDES adapted how we served the citizens of Mississippi while also having a safe environment for our customers and employees.

One way MDES was able to continue to serve the public was with drive-through job fairs. Job fairs have always been a good resource for both the employer and the job seeker. They are an excellent way for job seekers to meet with numerous employers all under one location. They also provide an opportunity for employers to meet face-to-face with a wide variety of job seekers. MDES regularly hosts job fairs coordinated by WIN Job Center staff throughout the state, whereby employers in the local community can interview candidates for their businesses. MDES also oversees the Governor's Job Fair Network (GJFN), a series of community-sponsored events that

bring together a diverse group of employers actively looking for employees.

In just a few short weeks, MDES staff devised a way for these interactions to continue and still comply with safety guidelines. The team decided to utilize drive-through job fairs at the WIN Job Centers, where a parking lot was available, and through the GJFN, outdoors in large parking lots. Employer representatives essentially line up outdoors, socially distanced, and job seekers are routed through the parking lot to meet with the employers from their vehicle. These events proved to be successful.

SEE NEXT PAGE





DRIVE-THRU GOVERNOR'S JOB FAIR SUCCESS

One such success was Lecetia Frezzell. Ms. Frezzell attended the Governor's Job Fair in Greenwood, MS, and was hired by Waffle House as a manager trainee.

Another way we were able to continue services to job seekers was through Job Readiness Activities (JRA). JRA is a core placement component for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work program participants and prepares them to seek or obtain employment. This includes life skills training for those who need these services to improve employability. Normally, these classes are held in person every four-week month of a calendar year. The pandemic forced MDES staff to virtually conduct the classes. Two workforce contact center staff members were trained to be statewide instructors for the JRA classes. Instructors provided these classes through an online learning system three days a week using the same materials developed for the in-person classes. Participants logged in from a personal device and took the essential skills courses that align with JRA.

One TANF participant, La'Desha Jones, an unemployed single parent, was assigned to perform community service at a local company to gain valuable work experience. When she was reassigned to attend JRA classes, the community work site employer called the WIN Job Center to inquire about making her a permanent offer of employment. Ms. Jones accepted the offer and transitioned from JRA training to a full-time job as a Research Analyst Assistant.

The positive impact the pandemic had on MDES forced our team to think outside the box to continue serving Mississippi's citizens.



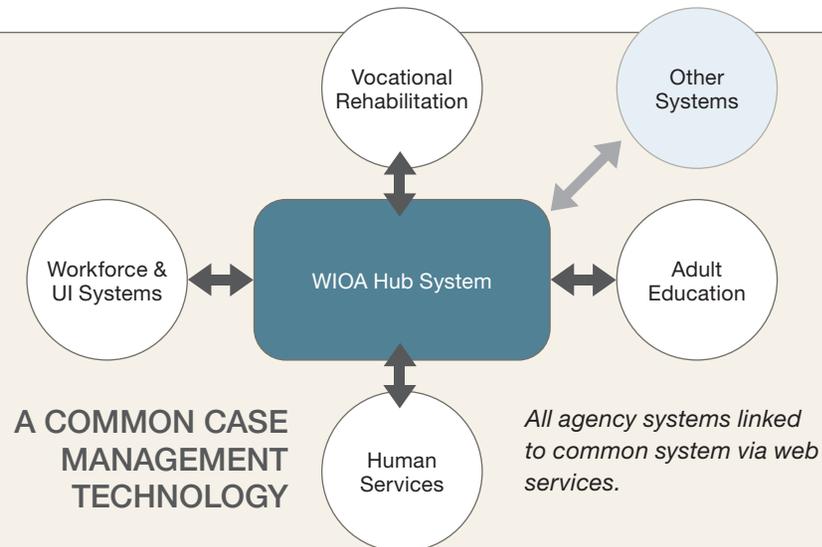
JOB READINESS ACTIVITIES SUCCESS

La'Desha Jones

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA Hub

Mississippi designed and developed a data system called the WIOA Hub to assist individuals across the WIOA partner agencies. A key goal of WIOA is to ensure that a Mississippian is connected to all services they need to connect to a job. Services from Mississippi’s WIOA partners help remove barriers to work such as childcare needs, lack of transportation, lack of a high-school diploma, help searching for a job, or help to overcome a disability. The Hub allows agencies to work together to ensure that customers get connected to the mixture of services they need to succeed. A key activity of WIOA implementation in Mississippi was creating a comprehensive dictionary of all the services provided by WIOA partners.

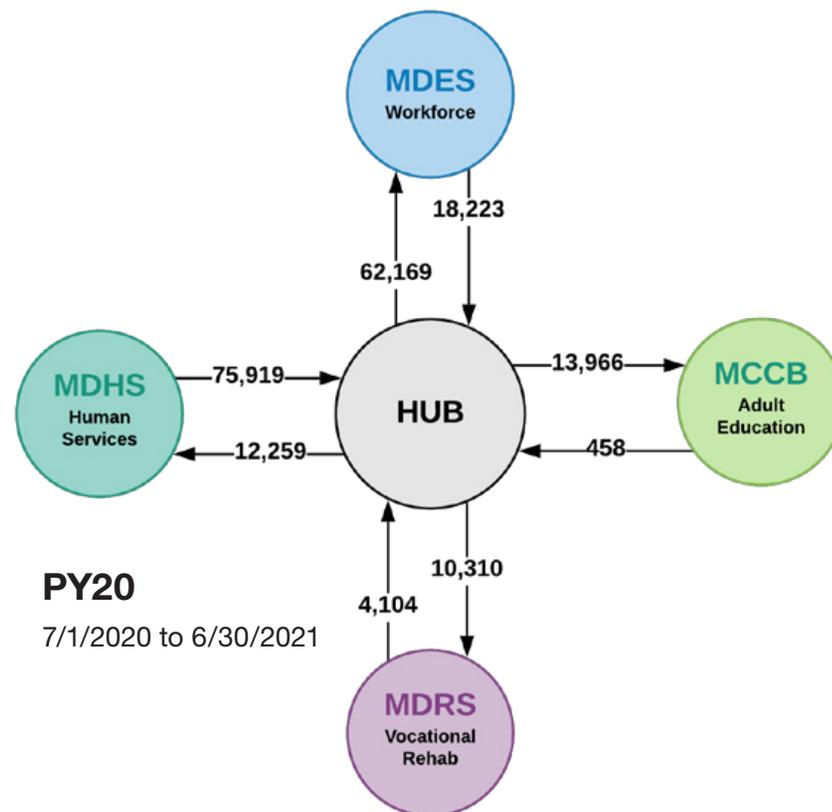


Services Provided

For program year 2020 (7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021), participants served by WIOA partners through the interagency WIOA Hub received over 345 distinct kinds of services. These services included transportation services, career planning, adult education training and testing, on-the-job training, household cash assistance, and even the purchase of assistive technologies to help remove barriers to work for Mississippians with disabilities. The most common service provided by MDES was reaching out to WIOA participants by email, phone, or a mailed letter with information about a good job opportunity—in fact, MDES did this 235,464 times.

Referrals

The Hub plays a key role in allowing agencies to refer customers electronically, with the goal that no one falls through procedural cracks. The Hub is like a post office, and every participating WIOA partner agency can use their own systems (mailboxes) to send and receive referrals to each other.



Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP)



The Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) works with community college and industry partners across the state to strengthen the workforce and provide more opportunities for Mississippians to participate in apprenticeship programs. These programs represent a variety of fields such as manufacturing, transportation and logistics, energy and utilities, banking and finance, and more that enable our state's residents to earn a living wage while learning a new skill that could lead to a meaningful career.

As a part of these efforts, MAP works to ensure people of diverse backgrounds learn about and take advantage of these programs across the state. We want to attract more businesses, industry, and community college partners to apprenticeship so that, regardless of their backgrounds, Mississippians have a chance to earn a family-sustaining wage. At the same time, they learn a new trade or profession.



Rapid Response

In an increasing globalized and highly competitive economy, businesses are rarely stable. Businesses are constantly growing or shrinking, or facing barriers such as the pandemic that continues to affect the workforce.

Rapid Response (RR) teams collaborate with the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), State, and area partners to quickly maximize public and private resources in an effort to minimize the disruptions that are associated with business closures or layoffs.

Customized services are made available on-site or via online applications to accommodate the needs of the business owners and affected employees to assist in the transitions that are associated with job loss. This early intervention promotes reemployment and is designed to bring together many separate partners to seamlessly provide an array of services.

Layoff Aversion early intervention is another tool used by the RR team to help avert layoffs and/or closures. The LWDAs take the lead in working with local businesses to create an ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship, building activities with businesses in the community that enable the workers to obtain reemployment as soon as possible, which can lower the need for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits payments. Mississippi continues to adapt to the many unique needs of industry during a pandemic, by streamlining our process to help businesses and employees faced with either temporary or permanent layoffs. Employers can submit basic employee information that will initiate UI claims for all affected employees.



“I wanted to thank you and the entire Rapid Response team for speaking to our team at Highly Marelli.

With unfortunate situations such as our case at HMUS, it is imperative to gain the participation of experts in the field of employment/supplemental services. Your willingness to share your time and expertise in this area was critical to the success of making our team members aware of the resources available after we close. I hope to keep in touch to gain more valuable information related to additional questions our team members may have. Once again, thanks so very much for your support!”

— Jazman Turner/Human Resources Department



Reemployment Assistance

At Mississippi Department of Employment Security, (MDES) The Office of ReEmployment Assistance (ORA) is a department that provides temporary payments to eligible individuals while they seek reemployment as directed by the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor’s unemployment insurance programs provides unemployment benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and meet certain other eligibility requirements. Unemployment insurance is a joint state-federal program that provides cash benefits to eligible workers. Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program, but all states follow the guidelines established by federal law.

Unemployment Insurance Benefits are paid from a trust fund. The fund is financed through payroll taxes which are paid by employers on a quarterly basis. One hundred percent (100%) of the funds collected are deposited into the trust fund and are used to pay the benefits to eligible unemployed workers. These benefit payments help job seekers focus on the path to reemployment and help lessen the negative impact of unemployment on the economy.



Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) allowed

\$300 ADDITIONAL PER WEEK TO INDIVIDUALS WHO QUALIFIED

Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) provided

\$100 ADDITIONAL PER WEEK TO INDIVIDUALS WHO QUALIFIED

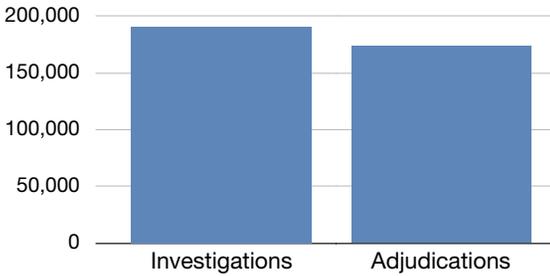
The COVID-19 Pandemic brought unprecedented challenges and unimaginable opportunities.

From July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, MDES was designated to administer unemployment assistance by the Continued Assistance for Unemployed Workers Act of 2020 (Continued Assistance Act). The programs allowed the following:

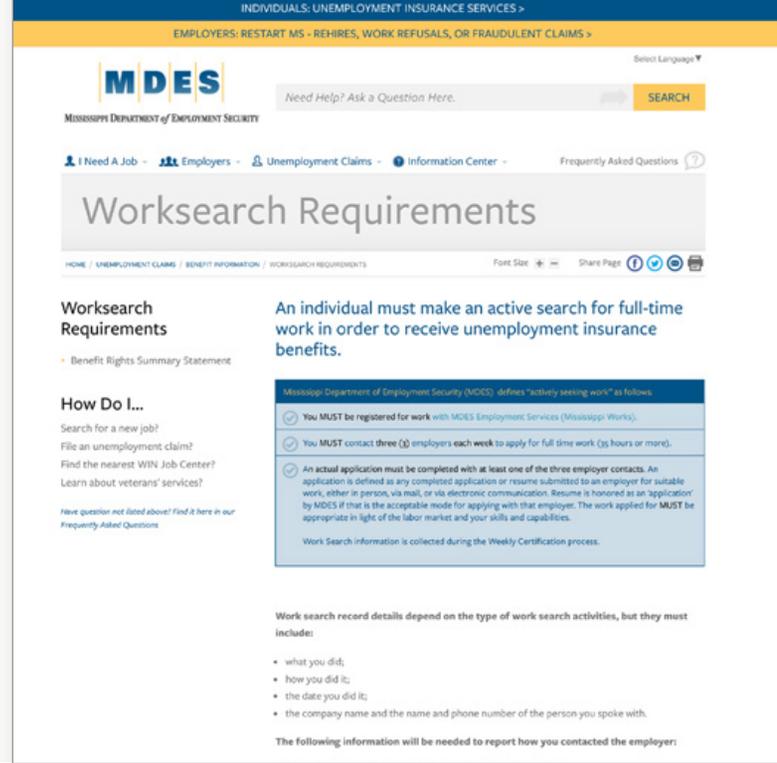
The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) allowed an additional \$300 per week, December 27, 2020 - March 13, 2021; the Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC) allowed an extra \$100 per week to individuals qualifying for regular, federal, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC); the Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA), Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) Self-Employment Assistance (SEA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) allowed weekly assistance to individuals who had exhausted benefits from other claims and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) assistance to self-employed and individuals who were not covered under other unemployment programs.

On May 10, 2021, MDES was directed to fully resume pre-pandemic enforcement of all eligibility requirements to receive unemployment under state law, which terminated Mississippi's participation in the federal/pandemic unemployment programs. MDES provided US-DOL a Notice of Intent (NOI) to terminate the federally funded programs, effective June 12, 2021.

MDES began hearing from employers throughout the state, expressing their need to communicate with us regarding the demand for workers. Due to feedback from employers throughout the state, MDES revised "Regulation 305.02," regarding Work Search Requirements.



Productivity had been steady. From July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, there were approximately 190,858 timely completed investigations and 173,093 timely completed adjudications.



By legislative action, reimbursable employers were exempted from

50% OF CHARGES THROUGH MARCH 13, 2021

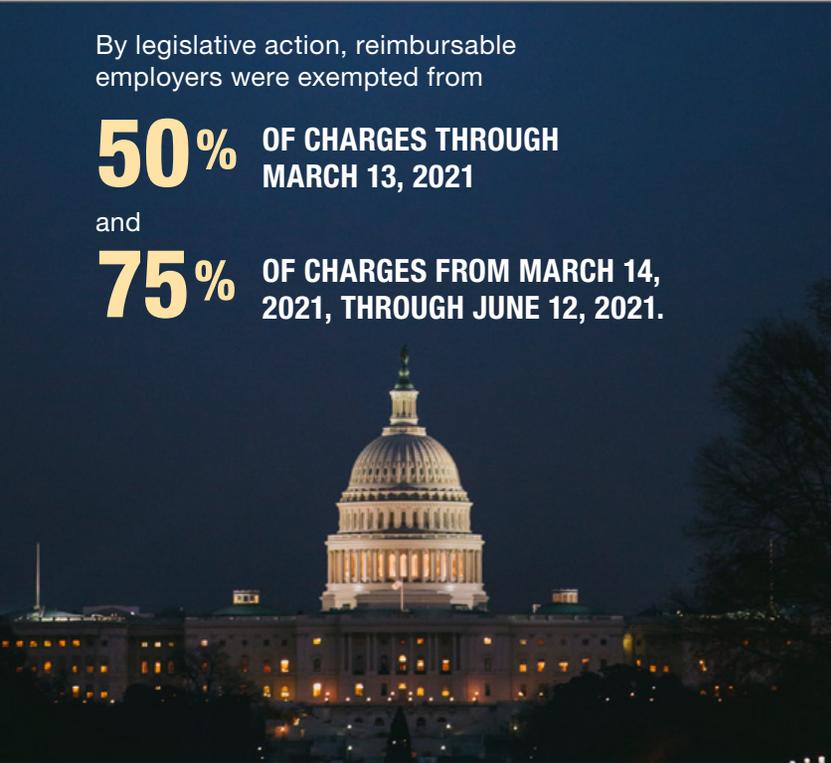
and

75% OF CHARGES FROM MARCH 14, 2021, THROUGH JUNE 12, 2021.

As part of the response to COVID-19, several legislative actions and executive orders impacted how MDES handled employer charges. One such legislative action restricted all charges made to a rated employer's account between March 8, 2020, and December 31, 2020, impacting the employer's individual experience rate for the year - 2021 and three subsequent years.

Federal legislation and executive orders had significant impacts on how charges were applied for reimbursable employers. Under that legislation, reimbursable employers were exempted from 50% of charges through March 13, 2021, and 75% of charges from March 14, 2021, through June 12, 2021. In addition, Executive Order 1541 allowed MDES the ability to non-charge reimbursable employers for charges associated with fraudulent claims for the period starting March 8, 2020 – March 14, 2021.

Following on the next page, is information on an important aspect of the Unemployment Insurance program, the various Performance Core Measures.



UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Performance Information

Core Measures

UI Core Measures	DOL Acceptable Level of Performance	MDES Performance Qtr ending 9/2020	MDES Performance Qtr ending 12/2020	MDES Performance Qtr ending 3/2021	MDES Performance Qtr ending 6/2021
First Payment Promptness	87%	60.6%	70.4%	66.1%	77%
Nonmonetary Determinations Time Lapse	80%	72.8%	77.3%	51.6%	52.2%
Nonmonetary Separation Quality	75%	83.3%	WAIVED	70.8%	72.9%
Nonmonetary Nonseparation Quality	75%	100%	WAIVED	89.4%	91.3%
New Employer Status Determination Time Lapse	70%	81.2%	80.7%	80.2%	85.9%
Lower Authority Appeals Quality	80%	94.7%	WAIVED	WAIVED	100%
Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals	<30 days	35.2	86.5	116.7	129.2
Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals	<40 days	15.9	11.6	11.5	10.4

Unemployment Insurance Performs Core Measures Acceptable Performance Guidelines

BENEFITS MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>First Payment Promptness: % of all 1st payments made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year (excludes Workshare, episodic claims such as DUA, and retroactive payments for a compensable waiting period).</p>	>87%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Time Lapse: % of Nonmonetary Determinations (Separations and Nonseparations) made within 21 days of the date of detection of any nonmonetary issue that had the potential to affect the claimant's benefit rights.</p>	>80%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Nonseparations: % of Nonseparation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of nonseparation determinations.</p>	>75%
<p>Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations: % of Separation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of separation determinations.</p>	>75%

OVERPAYMENT MEASURE

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Detection of Overpayments: % of detectable, recoverable overpayments estimated by the Benefit Accuracy Measurement survey that were established for recovery.</p>	<p>≥50% and <95% of detectable/ recoverable overpayments are established for recovery</p>
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APPEALS MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals: The sum of the ages, in days from filing, of all pending Lower Authority Appeals divided by the number of Lower Authority Appeals.</p>	<p><30 Days</p>
<p>Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals: The sum of the ages, in days from filing, of all pending Higher Authority Appeals divided by the number of Higher Authority Appeals.</p>	<p><40 Days</p>
<p>Lower Authority Appeals Quality: % of Lower Authority Appeals with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 85% of potential points, based on the evaluation results of quarterly samples selected from the universe of lower authority benefit appeal hearings.</p>	<p>>80%</p>

TAX MEASURES

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>New Employer Status Determinations Time Lapse: % of New Employer Status Determinations made within 90 days of the last day in the quarter in which the business became liable.</p>	<p>>70%</p>
<p>Tax Quality: Tax Performance System (TPS) assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the tax program determined by scoring, on a pass/fail basis, samples of the 13 tax functions.</p>	<p>No more than three tax functions failing TPS in any year</p>
	<p>No single tax function failing for three consecutive years</p>

REEMPLOYMENT MEASURE

Acceptable Levels of Performance

<p>Facilitate Reemployment: % of UI claimants who are reemployed within the quarter following the quarter in which they received their first UI payment.</p>	<p>Discontinued in FY 2020</p>
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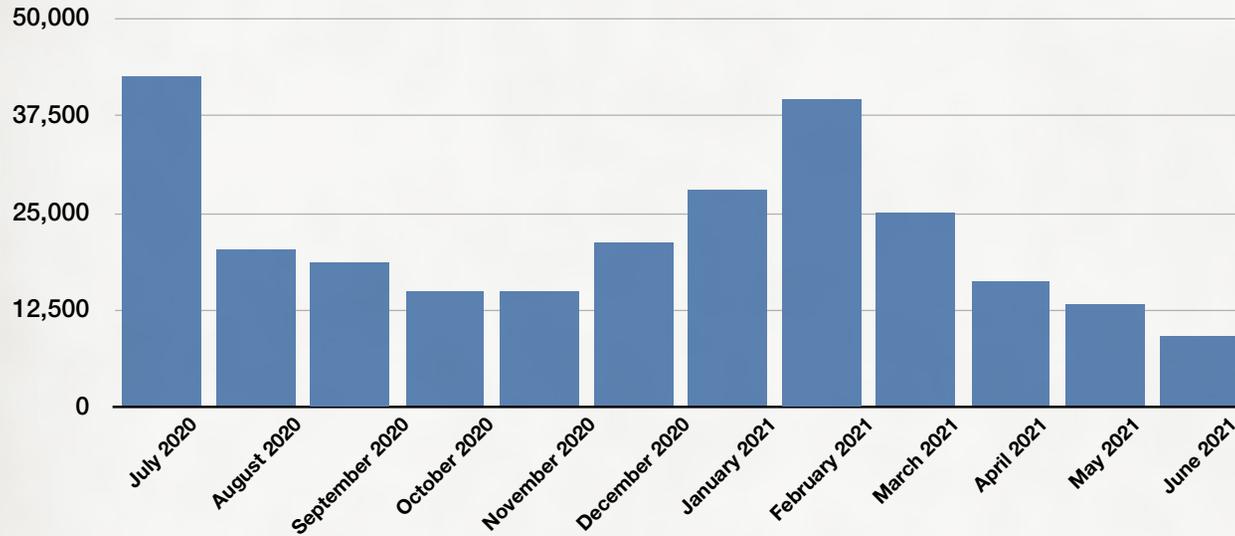
SECRETARY STANDARDS IN REGULATION

Performance Criteria

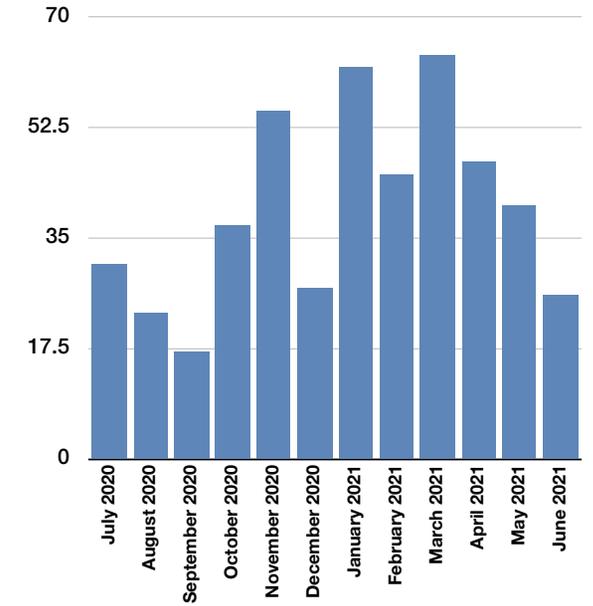
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Intrastate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	<p>>87%</p>
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Intrastate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 35 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	<p>>93%</p>
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Interstate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 14/21 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	<p>>70%</p>
<p>First Payment Promptness: % of Interstate UI 1st Payments (full weeks only) made within 35 days after the week ending date of the first compensable week in the benefit year.</p>	<p>>78%</p>
<p>Lower Authority Appeals: % of Lower Authority Appeals decided within 30 days of filing.</p>	<p>>60%</p>
<p>% of Lower Authority Appeals decided within 45 days of filing.</p>	<p>>80%</p>

Unemployment Claims

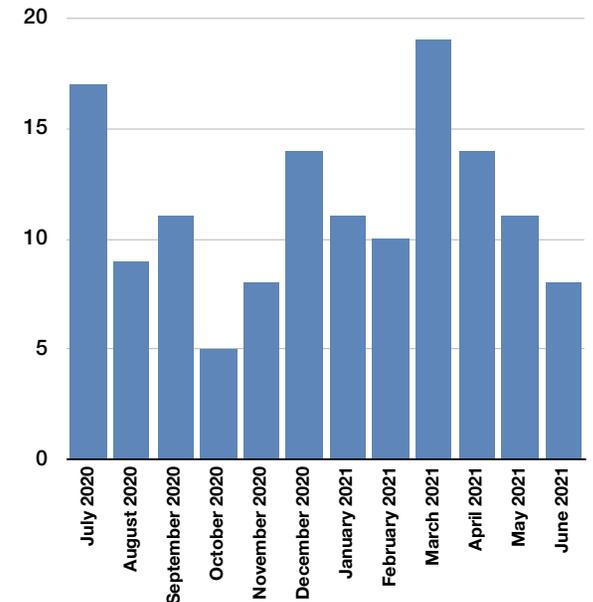
Unemployment Insurance Compensation



UI Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)



UI Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX)

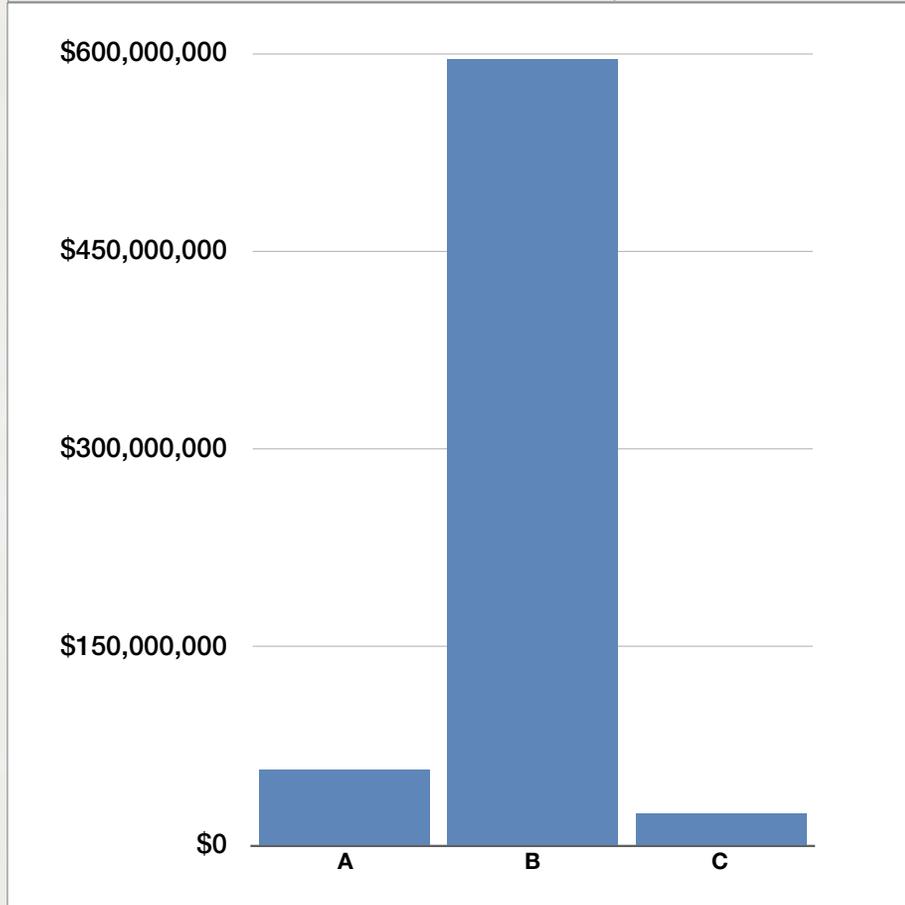


Month	Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)	Unemployment Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX)	Unemployment Insurance
July 2020	31	17	42,618
August 2020	23	9	20,289
September 2020	17	11	18,631
October 2020	37	5	14,844
November 2020	55	8	14,757
December 2020	27	14	21,225
January 2021	62	11	27,936
February 2021	45	10	39,614
March 2021	64	19	24,947
April 2021	47	14	16,263
May 2021	40	11	13,255
June 2021	26	8	9,218
Total	474	137	263,597

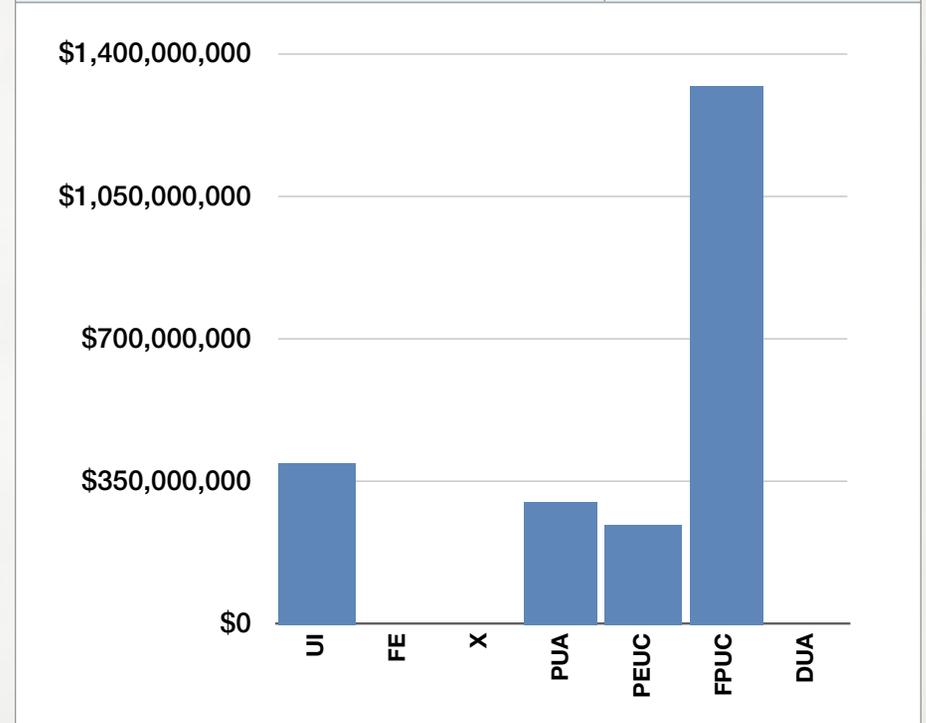
Source ETA, 5159 - Claims and Payment Activities, Section A: Claims Activities

Unemployment Insurance Activities

EMPLOYERS PAYING UI TAX	58,493
A. UI Tax Collected	\$57,619,970.48
B. Trust Fund Balance at June 30, 2021	\$595,880,336.30
C. Transfer to WET Fund	\$25,183,247.79



REGULAR UI CLAIMS FILED	264,208
Unemployment Insurance (UI)	\$394,357,923.75
Federal (FE)	\$1,733,446.41
Military (X)	\$533,055.00
Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)	\$301,200,873.59
Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)	\$247,720,951.00
Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)	\$1,319,480,628.84
Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)	\$8,798.00



COVID-19: UI Technology Response

In March 2020, more so than any prior economic downturn, the Pandemic of COVID-19 caused a spiral of consequences for state agencies worldwide. Without warning, the entire country faced an economic shutdown resulting in challenges and uncertainty. COVID-19 threatened the livelihood of millions of individuals. With support from our Governor and State Legislators, MDES was able to rise to the challenge and provide services successfully.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) implemented a series of very complex supplemental income programs. The technology efforts of MDES made to implement the programs resulted in the disbursement of millions of dollars quickly to unemployed individuals.



Online Unemployment Insurance System Modernization

MDES modernized its online unemployment insurance system with a national best-in-class unemployment system before the pandemic. The modernized system allowed law changes to be implemented at a record pace and enabled the agency to process hundreds of thousands of claims. This was proved to be unmatched by most state agencies in that amount of time.

While most states were struggling with antiquated legacy systems, MDES was already processing claims and making payments to thousands of claimants, putting millions of dollars into the pockets and purses of thousands of Mississippi households who were in need.

The UI claims volume increased by more than 3,000 percent.
The following highlights the MDES actions, capability, and preparedness for this unprecedented and unanticipated event in history:

SCALING UP SEAMLESSLY

MDES was already operating the system in the cloud; capable of scaling up seamlessly to handle the increased workload.



SELF-SERVICE CAPABILITIES

The system had self-service capabilities, enabling citizens to file their claims from the comfort of their homes, protecting themselves from the spread of COVID-19.



Continued on following two pages.

ADDITIONS TO STAFF

MDES hired additional staff and proactively planned for technology availability to increase staff size. Throughout the pandemic, MDES remained open, added additional shifts, while taking all precautions to protect our staff.



MDES procured and implemented a **cloud-based contact center** where staff did not have to be collocated to answer calls.

MDES implemented **virtual conference and meeting software** before the pandemic that immensely streamlined communication between different teams working from different locations.

MDES increased the **internet bandwidth** rapidly to handle the increase in demand.

PARTNERSHIPS

MDES formed partnerships with multiple organizations to increase its contact center capacity and hours of service to handle the massive volume.



AHEAD OF THE CURVE

MDES kept its unemployment system ahead of the curve over the last decade with constant upgrades and improvements, which made it one of the best in the nation.



NEW TECHNOLOGIES

MDES implemented new technologies during the pandemic to assist with the increased workload. The creation of robotic process automation, where a bot is trained to simulate a human and perform certain tasks, enabled the staff to work on tasks that required human intelligence.



MEET MAGGI

MDES launched a chatbot nicknamed “Maggi,” to assist with claims status and password resets. The chatbot is still active and responds to claim status inquiries with no human intervention.



INTERACTIVE VOICE RESPONSE (IVR)

The claims status inquiry is also available through an IVR-based voice bot for claimants to access status immediately.



CONSORTIUM

The MDES unemployment system continues to operate in a consortium environment, partnering with the states of Maine and Connecticut, which helps save the taxpayers countless dollars in technology expenditure, sharing the same vendor, and utilizing the same technology infrastructure and technology solutions across the consortium member states. The consortium also shares best practices while learning from each other.



FRAUD PREVENTION

MDES quickly implemented anti-fraud measures by analyzing claims for patterns and suspicious data elements. MDES implemented an industry-leading identity proofing solution that quickly thwarted efforts of the fraud rings and provided much-needed protection to the thousands of impacted Mississippians.



MDES is extremely proud of its staff, technology, and leadership that came together to serve the citizens and businesses of Mississippi during the pandemic.

TRAINING AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS

FY2021 Activities

One of the positive outcomes of the pandemic at Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) was the development of the MDES Training Department. The need was identified before the pandemic but was justified as the pandemic progressed. MDES invested in a Learning Management System (LMS) to host training sessions. This system allowed the training department to virtually host several training sessions related to systems and processes for MDES staff during the pandemic.



Virtual Training

The first virtual training was held in December 2020 using the new LMS. The training was a partnership with the Mississippi Department of Mental Health focused on *Understanding Mental Health and Suicide Prevention*. This was a timely session since many of our staff were overwhelmed by the calls for assistance and the stories conveyed to them by desperate claimants.

Focused Training Areas

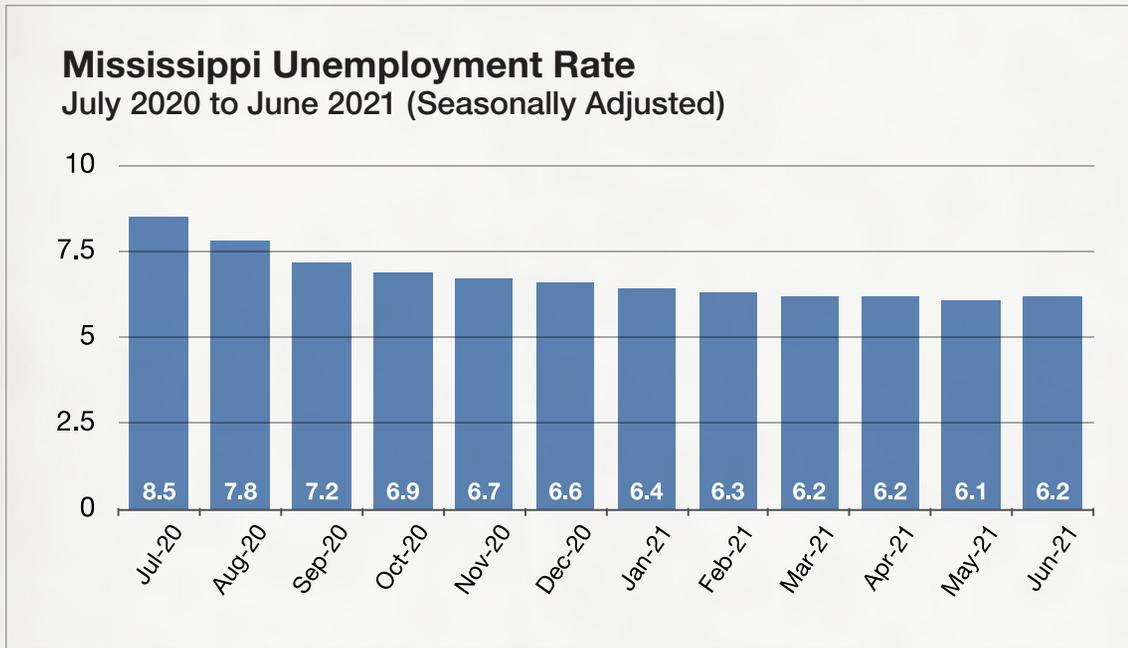
Since the launch in late 2020, the training department has delivered monthly training sessions focused on **customer service** and **unemployment insurance cross-training**.

The team also developed a **New Hire training** to help onboard new employees. This helps managers know what each new hire should expect during their first 10-days with the agency and provides online classes to complete over the same period. It allows managers to free up time introducing new hires to the agency, its departments, and its mission.



LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Performance Information



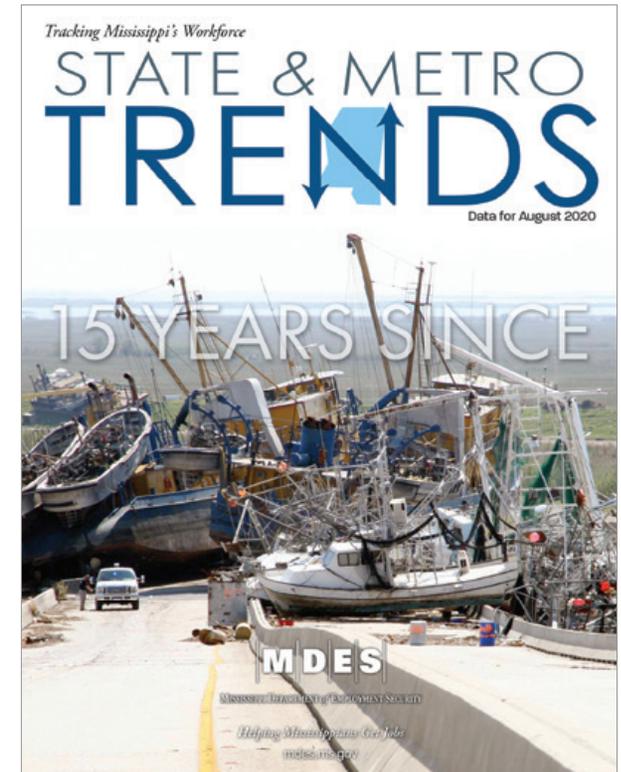
Labor Market Information (LMI) at Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the department that reports information on the number of people employed or unemployed, unemployment rates, average wages, population, income, occupational projections, and other economic variables for Mississippi. The LMI Department, through federal grants with the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Employment and Training Administration, operates statistical programs to capture and report economic information.

INFORMATION REQUESTS

(Includes documents downloaded from the website) **23,915**

Descriptions of statistical programs operated by the LMI Department and the monthly state and local area employment and unemployment data can be found online at www.mdes.ms.gov/lmi

The purpose of LMI and its publications is to aid our customers in identifying available workforce information and directing them to the data source that most appropriately meets their needs. A list of some of the LMI Publications follows below and on the next two pages.



Current Employment Statistics provides monthly estimates of employment, hours, and earnings by industry for the state and metropolitan statistical areas. Estimates were published monthly in “State & Metro Trends.”

Estimates disseminated each year 48

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/state-and-metro-trends/>

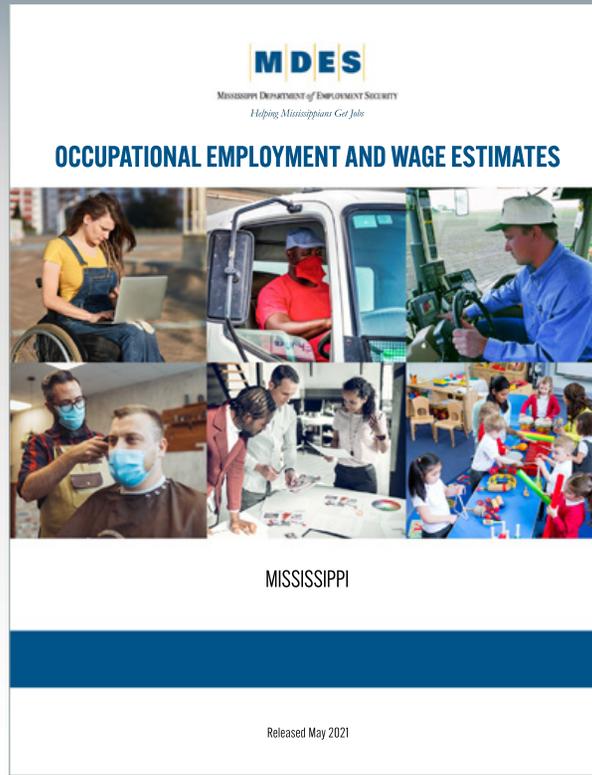


Local Area Unemployment Statistics provides monthly estimates of civilian labor force, employed people, unemployed people, and unemployment rates for the state, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and select cities.

Documents generated per year..... 4,246

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/labor-market-data/>

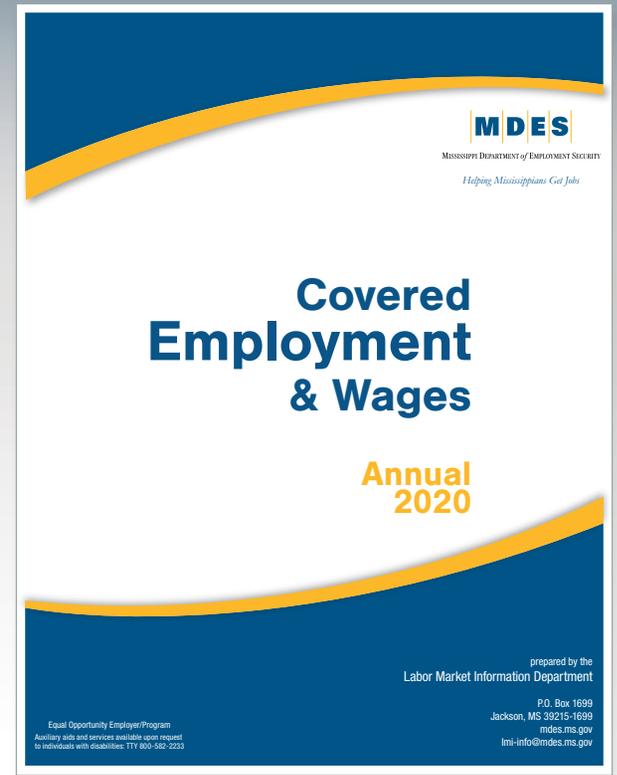


Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics provides occupational employment and wage estimates for wage and salary workers annually for the state, workforce development areas, and metropolitan statistical areas. The annual estimates were published in *“Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates.”*

Employers surveyed per year3,920

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/occupational-employment-and-wages/>



Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages provides data of employment and wages by industry for the state, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and workforce development areas. The Enhanced Quarterly Unemployment Insurance file was submitted each quarter before the deadline. Estimates of annual average employment and annual average wages by industry for the state and counties were published in *“Covered Employment and Wages.”*

Average units edited each quarter..... 74,946

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/covered-employment-and-wages/>

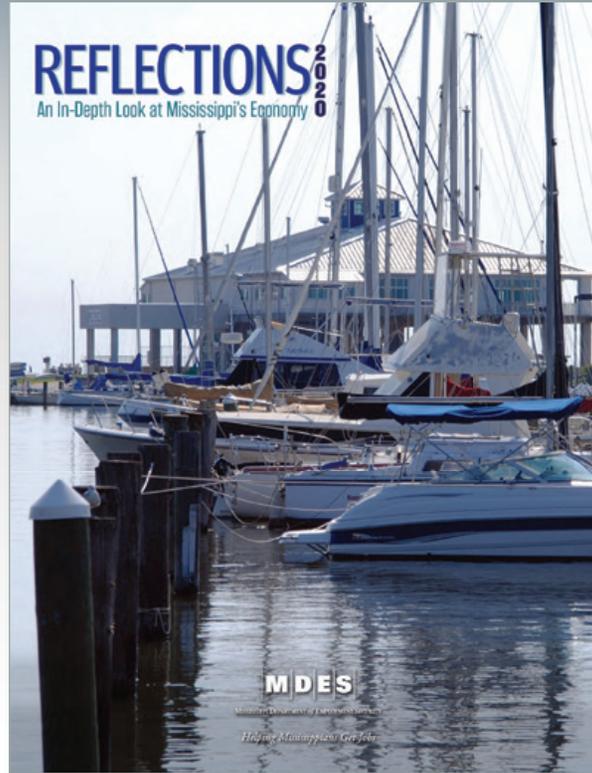


Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries provides a count of all fatal work injuries for the state.

Data was gathered to identify, verify and describe fatal work injuries in the state. Counts of fatal work injuries were produced by gender, age, race, occupation, and industry.

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/tgs/2020/iiffw28.htm>



The **Annual Economic Analysis report** was published in "Reflections."

The report provided data for the state, counties, metropolitan statistical areas, and workforce development areas on population, labor force, employment by industry, per capita income, and sales tax revenues. An Index of Economic Stability was generated by area.

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/reflections/>



Industry and Occupational Projections forecast employment by industry or occupation. Short-term projections for the period 2020 to 2022 were produced for the state. Long-term industry and occupational projections for the period 2018 to 2028 were created at the sub-state levels as follows: Metropolitan Statistical Areas (3), Workforce Development Areas (4) and Community College Districts (13).

GET INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS ONLINE:

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/industry-projections/>

GET OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS ONLINE:

<https://www.mdes.ms.gov/information-center/labor-market-information/labor-market-publications/occupational-projections/>

COVID-19 Timeline



2020



JANUARY 7

Chinese authorities identify and isolate a novel coronavirus as the causative agent of the outbreak.



JANUARY 20

CDC confirms the first U.S. laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 in the U.S. from samples taken on January 18 in Washington state.



FEBRUARY 11

The World Health Organization announces the official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak: **COVID-19**.



MARCH 6

Governor Tate Reeves Declares State of Emergency to Protect Public Health.



MARCH 13

President Donald Trump issues a National State of Emergency Proclamation for COVID-19.

JANUARY 17

CDC begins screening passengers on direct and connecting flights from Wuhan, China to San Francisco, California, New York City, New York, and Los Angeles, California and plans to expand screening to other major airports.



JANUARY 29

The White House established the Coronavirus Task Force.



MARCH 4

Governor Tate Reeves Announces Decisive Actions on Coronavirus, Cyber Security, DHS Appointment.



MARCH 11

The first case of COVID-19 Identified in Mississippi.
The World Health Organization declares COVID-19 a pandemic.



MARCH 14

Governor Tate Reeves Declares State of Emergency to Protect Public Health.





MARCH 16

Governor Reeves also signed Executive Order No. 1458 which allows state agencies to determine which state employees are essential and send everyone else home. The Governor encouraged other businesses in Mississippi to do the same with their employees.

Executive Order No. 1458 also ensures paid leave for any state or local employees missing work due to COVID-19. The Governor is working with the Legislature to make sure it applies to everyone who could qualify and hopes that the private sector will follow suit.



MARCH 24

Governor Reeves announces more Guidelines to help slow the spread of COVID-19.



MARCH 28

To ensure Mississippi was eligible to receive the CARES Act funds, Governor Tate Reeves signed an agreement with the US-DOL.



APRIL 10

Mississippi becomes one of the first states to begin paying eligible Mississippians filing for Unemployment additional Pandemic Unemployment Assistance through CARES Act funding.



APRIL 17

Governor Reeves Extends Shelter-In-Place by 7 Days; Enables Safe Sales by “Non-Essential” Businesses.

MARCH 20

Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) announced today that Mississippi workers who are not able to work due to COVID-19 will be eligible to file for unemployment benefits.



MARCH 21

Governor Reeves provides unemployment benefits to help Mississippi workers during COVID-19 outbreak.



MARCH 27

The CARES Act is signed into law.



APRIL 1

Governor Tate Reeves issues a Shelter-In-Place Executive Order from April 3 until April 20.



APRIL 14

Governor Tate Reeves announced that he has asked leaders of Mississippi’s business community to chart a course for economic recovery and re-opening Mississippi’s economy. Mississippi had seen a nearly 9,000% increase in unemployment claims.





APRIL 24
Governor Tate Reeves Signs Safer At Home Order to Begin Reopening State's Economy.



MAY 8
Governor Reeves Extends Safer At Home To Protect Public Health, Reopens Barbershops and Salons.



MAY 15
Governor Tate Reeves Amends Safer At Home Order to Safely Reopen Tattoo Parlors.



MAY 21
Governor Reeves Appoints Patrick Sullivan to Chairman of the State Workforce Investment Board.



MAY 27
Governor Tate Reeves Announces Safe Return for Mississippi in Final Stages of Reopening Economy.

APRIL 21
People who live or work in Mississippi and could not work as a "direct result" of the pandemic that occurred on February 2, 2020, and ongoing, are entitled to apply and may be eligible to receive PUA.



MAY 4
Governor Reeves Amends Safer At Home Order to Safely Reopen Restaurants and Parks.



MAY 11
Governor Reeves Extends Unemployment Benefits to Help Mississippi Workers Impacted by COVID-19.



MAY 19
Governor Tate Reeves Releases Guidelines for Safe In-Person Worship Services.



MAY 22
Governor Tate Reeves Extends Safer At Home Order to Continue Flattening the Curve.





JUNE 10
Governor Tate Reeves Announces Applications Live for Back To Business Mississippi Grant Program.

MAY 29
Governor Tate Reeves Launches Back to Business Mississippi Website to Help Small Businesses Recover from COVID-19.



JULY 2
The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) developed the ReStart MS system to assist the business community in transitioning employees, who were separated from their jobs due to COVID-19 back into the workforce.

JUNE 26
Governor Tate Reeves Extends Safe Return Order to Protect Public Health Amid Rising Cases.



JULY 30
Some Mississippians May Be Eligible For Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC.)

JULY 28
Some Mississippians May Be Eligible for the Extended Benefits Program.



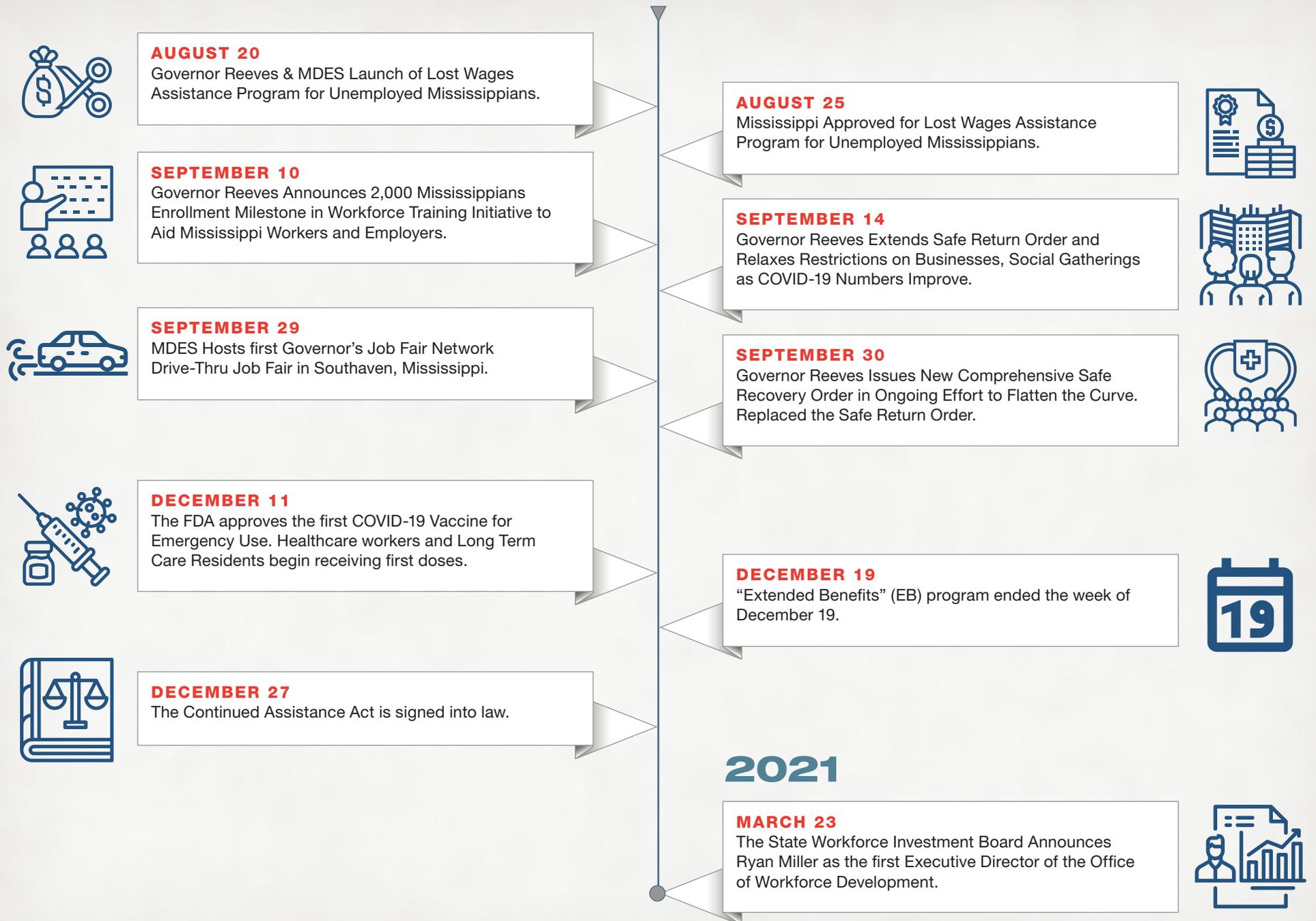
AUGUST 5
Governor Reeves Launches Workforce Training Initiative to Aid Mississippi Workers and Employers Burdened by COVID-19.

AUGUST 4
Governor Reeves Issues Statewide Mask Mandate, Delays School Reopenings to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus.



AUGUST 6
Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) announced the Work Search temporary waiver under the Executive Order No. 1510 will expire as of August 08, 2020.







MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

Helping Mississippians Get Jobs

601-493-9427 | mdes.ms.gov

An equal opportunity employer and program, MDES has auxiliary aids and services available upon request to those with disabilities.

Those needing TTY assistance may call 800-582-2233.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.